

## The Health of Seattle Women

May, 2005

### Demographics

- In 2000, Seattle had 282,130 female residents, accounting for 50% of the total population. Among them, 15% were under age 18 and another 15% were 65 and older. The median age was 36 years.
- 12.3% of the Seattle women lived below poverty.
- 11% of the women age 25+ did not have a high school diploma.
- Non-white residents accounted for 30% of the female population. The poverty rates among the minority groups were two to three times the white rate (Table 1).

Table 1. Females in Seattle by race/ethnicity, 2000 Census

	No. of Females	%	% Below Poverty
Total	282,130	-	12.3%
White	197,590	70.0%	8.8%
African American	22,783	8.1%	23.8%
Asian	38,695	13.7%	17.3%
Am. Indian/Alaskan Native	2,719	1.0%	28.8%
Native Hawaiian/Other PI	1,216	0.4%	22.7%
Other	5,530	2.0%	23.4%
Two or more races	13,597	4.8%	19.9%
Hispanic	13,373	4.7%	24.1%

### Health Status

In 2003, the life expectancy for Seattle women was 83.6 years, higher than the 80.1 years observed in the US. The five leading causes of death among Seattle women were heart disease, cancer, stroke, Alzheimer's disease, and chronic lower respiratory disease. In addition, among Seattle women age 18 and over:<sup>1</sup>

- 13% of those age 18-64 did not have health insurance
- 41% were overweight (BMI $\geq$ 25), including 17% obese (BMI $\geq$ 30) and the trend is still increasing
- 13% did not participate in any physical activity
- 15% were current smokers
- 68% did not eat five servings of fruits/vegetables a day
- 22% of the women age 18-34 practiced binge drinking (5+ drinks on one occasion in the past month)
- 10% had current asthma

Among elderly women age 65+:

- 14% had coronary heart disease
- 7% had stroke
- 10% had diabetes
- 58% had high blood pressure
- 51% had arthritis
- 36% had activity limitations due to physical, mental, or emotional problems

<sup>1</sup> Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, 2002-2004 averages

### Breast and Cervical Health

- In 2003, there were 76 deaths from breast cancer and 2 from cervical cancer in Seattle. In 2002, 432 women were diagnosed for invasive breast cancer and 12 for invasive cervical cancer<sup>2</sup>.
- Averaged over 2002 and 2004, 39% of the women age 40-49, 12% age 50-64, and 19% age 65 and over did not receive a mammography screening within two years.
- On cervical cancer screening, 28% of the women age 18-24, 6% of the women age 25-64, and 37% of the women age 65-74 did not receive a Pap test within three years.

### Pregnancy and Birth

- In 2003, there were a total of 6,369 births in Seattle. On the average, a Seattle woman can be expected to give 1.26 births in her lifetime.
- Of the women given births, 86% began prenatal care during the first trimester.
- The rates of teen pregnancy and birth had declined steadily and significantly since 1991.

### Domestic Violence

In 2003, there were a total of 4,694 domestic violence offenses reported to the Seattle Police Department, including 3 murders, 19 rapes, 35 robberies, 592 aggravated assaults, and 1,121 violations of protection orders. The rate for major domestic violence crimes (including murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) in Seattle (116.5 per 100,000) was significantly higher than in King County (74.4 per 100,000). However, we cannot ascertain the gender of the victims from the police data.

### Health Disparity

Among Seattle women, significant disparities in health are observed among racial/ethnic groups. For example, African American and Native American women had significantly higher rates of heart disease death, diabetes death, teen birth, and obesity than whites.

Table 2. Diabetes death, Teen Birth, and obesity prevalence among Seattle women by Race/ethnicity and area

Race/Ethnicity and Poverty Area	Heart dis Death Rate	Diabetes Death Rate*	Teen Birth Rate**	Un-insured 18-64
White	141.3	15.4	9.2	10.9
African Am	196.9	63.5	25.1	19.4
Native Am	204.6	48.4	25.0	-
Asian	91.5	26.0	11.5	11.8
Hispanic	95.5	17.9	41.2	33.9

\*Age-adjusted death per 100,000 females, 1999-2003

\*\*Births per 1000 females age 15-17, 1999-2003

\*\*\*Percent BMI $\geq$ 30 among women age 18+, 2000-2004 averages

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<sup>2</sup> Source: Vital Statistics and Washington State Cancer Registry.